

Joint *Bentcher*

February 2, 2023

**Q** Do I participate in a *zimun* if I only drank?



**A** A group of three recites *zimun* before *birkas hamazon* when they partake in a meal of bread. The *Rishonim* debate whether all three must have eaten bread, or just two. The halacha follows the latter view (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 197:3). A third man may join the group even by just drinking a substantial drink (like wine or fruit juice, not water or seltzer; O.C. *ibid.* and Aruch Hashulchan 197:5). Contemporary *poskim* debate the status of coffee and tea (Piskei Teshuvos *ibid.* 2). The *zimun* should be led by someone who ate bread (O.C. 197:3 and M.B.).

Likewise, people who drank are counted among the ten to say *zimun* with *sheim Hashem*, provided that at least seven ate bread (O.C. 197:2).

The members of a *zimun* may not recite *birkas hamazon* individually (O.C. 193:1). Even one who only drank must preserve the *zimun* and not recite *borei nefashos* early. If three (or ten, as applicable) members remain without him, he may leave early (Shulchan Aruch HaRav 197:4). However, one who ate bread may not leave early, even if this wouldn't affect the group, as he must *bentch* with the *zimun*.

When diners recite *zimun*, a bystander may join in even if he only drank water (Aruch Hashulchan 198:2). The *Pri Megadim* (cited in M.B. 198:1) is unsure whether he may answer the *zimun* with *sheim Hashem*, but many *poskim* allow this (Aruch Hashulchan *ibid.* and others.).

A drinker may only join the *zimun* if he drank enough to say a *bracha acharonah* (a *revi'is*). If he didn't, he participates by responding as a non-eater does: "*Baruch umevorach Shmo tamid le'olam va'ed.*"

If one ate or drank but already made a *bracha acharonah*, he responds as a non-eater.